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Influenza News



The National Influenza Vaccination Disparities Partnership (NIVDP) is comprised of multi-sector partners who work to promote flu vaccination among underserved populations including African Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians/Alaska Natives. The partnership and this newsletter are supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

All Efforts Make a Difference

In this issue of *Influenza News*, we highlight a range of flu vaccination promotional efforts by the NIVDP partners. Regardless of size, NIVDP flu vaccination awareness events are making a difference in communities that reach medically underserved populations. Many partners work with their local health departments to host mass flu vaccination events. For new partners, often the first step towards launching a major flu vaccination awareness event is working with a local clinic or organization. Some examples include:

- Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, held its first ever flu vaccination promotion event on campus for students and community members;
- Open Door Clinic in Raleigh, North Carolina, organized flu vaccination clinics for older adults, and those living with chronic diseases;
- Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin organized a flu vaccination event with their tribal communities; and
- VOCES of Puerto Rico coordinated a mass vaccination event called *Flupalooza* and vaccinated more than 8,000 people.

SPOTLIGHT ON PARTNERS

JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY FLU VACCINATION EVENT DRAWS STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

On October 3rd, Nurse Marian Jones, Director of Student Health Services at Johnson C. Smith University, organized the first ever vaccination event on campus for students and community members. The historically black college located in Charlotte, North Carolina, is a new partner to the NIVDP. "We are an educational institution with a social commitment to Charlotte's vulnerable populations. We care about the well-being of students and community members," shared Nurse Jones.

Dr. Ronald Carter, the University's president, is equally supportive of the NIVDP outreach efforts, and informed African American community leaders of the partnership's presence on campus. Word of mouth and media outreach resulted in 49 vaccinations. Students made up the majority of those vaccinated; however, the clinic was open to the community as well. Among those vaccinated was a 64 year-old woman, without health insurance or ability to pay, who was grateful that the university and the NIVDP provided free flu vaccinations.



Nurse Marian Jones,
Johnson C. Smith University,
Director of
Student Health Services

OPEN DOOR CLINIC IN NORTH CAROLINA HOSTS WEEKLY FLU CLINICS DURING SEPTEMBER

Open Door Clinic of Raleigh, North Carolina, is one of the first free clinics in the area to offer health care services, food, and shelter. Administrative Director, Pablo Escobar, supports the NIVDP. "Open Door has limited resources and we have to scrounge together every dollar we can get. I am not sure how we would have gotten flu vaccinations to our patients without the NIVDP." With resources that the NIVDP provides, Open Door Clinic has vaccinated over 100 patients during weekly flu vaccination events in September.

"Our population is vulnerable to the flu. Our patients have asthma, they are elderly, and some suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Without flu vaccination, their lives could be in danger. With the help of the NIVDP, Open Door Clinic is meeting its mission of health care as a right and not a privilege," affirmed Mr. Escobar.



Patient getting vaccinated during Open Door Clinic vaccination event in Raleigh, NC

WISCONSIN AMERICAN INDIAN ELDERS GET VACCINATED

The Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center (GLIHC), located in the heart of Milwaukee, is an urban Indian health clinic that serves nearly 15,000 American Indians throughout Southeastern Wisconsin. For the past 8 years, GLIHC has partnered with the Indian Council of the Elderly (ICE), a Milwaukee-based tribal senior center, to provide monthly health screenings and flu vaccines to American Indian/Alaska Native elders.

"Because Native elders are at greater risk of complications from the flu, resulting in hospitalizations and death, GLIHC makes vaccination of our elders a top priority," said GLIHC diabetes nurse, Desiree Schocko. "Every flu season we collaborate with ICE to raise awareness about the importance of flu vaccination among elders. We also hold a flu clinic at ICE during their weekly elder's luncheons."

For this season, GLIHC has successfully vaccinated 28 elders at the ICE luncheons. Additionally, GLIHC will offer flu vaccination at their clinic and at the 2nd Annual Native Community Wellness Event at Marquette University in Milwaukee on November 9, 2014.



An elder from the Oneida Tribe is vaccinated by Desiree Schocko, RN at GLIHC in Wisconsin

FLUPALOOZA IN PUERTO RICO PROTECTS OVER 8,000 AGAINST THE FLU

VOCES, the Puerto Rican Immunization Coalition, coordinated an eight-hour long flu vaccination event known as

Flupalooza at the Roberto Clemente Coliseum in Hato Rey. This event was held in partnership with the Department of Health in Puerto Rico, the Autonomous Municipality of San Juan, and other private sector entities.

"We are pleased that 8,235 were vaccinated against the flu. It is a great achievement towards avoiding an outbreak and we are seeing a shift in the awareness people have about the threat of the flu," announced Lilliam Rodriguez, President of the Board of Directors for VOCES.

Given the current outbreak of chikungunya in Puerto Rico, health experts have been urging residents to get their flu vaccinations early in the season. Chikungunya is an illness with an acute febrile phase followed by a longer period of joint pains. "The co-existence of these two viruses could have fatal outcomes," warned Dr. Marina Román, the Medical Director of the Autonomous Municipality of San Juan.

Flupalooza provided free educational health workshops from private health plans and plenty of entertainment for families. Some of the entertainment included an artist marathon where well-known illustrators and cartoonists offered their talents during the event. Also, several popular singers and dancers kept the families entertained while they received their flu vaccine.



Flupalooza flu vaccination event is a big success in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico

Share your ideas, photos, and events with us. We will feature them in upcoming issues of InFLUential News.

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